Houses in Singapore

Introduction

Throughout its history, Singapore has been home to a cosmopolitan mixture of people—Arab traders, British civil servants, Bugis sailors, Chinese and Indian immigrants, European merchants and others. The majority of the residents lived in the overcrowding slums and squatter settlements; some of them lived in ethnic kampongs within their communities. The wealthy ones would build huge, comfortable and spacious bungalows or villas[1].

However, rapid urbanisation was carried out during the 1960s to resolve the problem of housing shortage in Singapore. As a result, many of these housings disappeared.

Today, there are 1.15 million resident households (82.4%) living in public housing provided by the Housing and Development Board (HDB). Basically, HDB provides the following types of HDB dwellings—two-room, three-room, four-room, five-room, executive flats, Design, Build and Sell Scheme (DBSS) flats, Studio Apartments, and Executive Condominiums (EC)—to meet different housing requirements for Singaporeans and their families. Around 16.9% of our resident households live in private housing such as condominiums and private flats, and landed properties—bungalows, semi-detached bungalows and terrace houses. The remaining 0.7% of our resident households live in other public flats and non-HDB shophouses.


Editorial Notes

Books and texts are often mainstays of resource guides as these provide introductory and comprehensive information on a particular topic. In the creation of this libguide however, effort was also made to recommend resources that are highly accessible, such as newspaper articles, authoritative websites, among others. Please find below a brief write-up of the resource formats, as well as, how to access them.

- Print materials from both the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, as well as, NLB's Public Libraries. Just click on the given links to activate NLB's online catalogue showing availability of the items. Apart for the reference books at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, books recommended in this guide can be reserved online.
and brought to the library branch of your choice for a small fee of $1.55 (just click on "Reserve this item").

- Newspaper articles from the Factiva database, as well as, the NewspaperSG database. Factiva is available via our eResources service via [http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg). Newspapers from NewspaperSG can be accessed via [http://newspapers.nl.sg](http://newspapers.nl.sg). Articles from 1831 - 1989 can be accessed from home (direct links to the articles are provided) while those after 1989 can only be accessed onsite at the libraries.

- Embedded videos. A picture speaks thousand words, what more a video? Click the play button on the embedded videos (from reputable sources) for some visual learning.

- Web resources. Relevant websites on the topic via the web

This guide highlights items in the collection, and is thus not intended to be comprehensive. Interested readers should search the NLB catalogue for more works.

Share your links
If you know of any interesting resource not featured in this guide, please share with us! It's easy, just click below :)

Books

- 25 Tropical Houses in Singapore and Malaysia by Geoffrey London; Paul McGillick; Patrick Bingham-Hall
  Call Number: 728.3709595 MAC
  This book displays the new, modern designs of twenty-five tropical houses and condominiums in Singapore.

  Image: All rights reserved. Publishers Group Worldwide [distributor], c2006.

- Ang Mo Kio: a heritage trail by Tan, Chui Hua
  Call Number: 959.57 TAN
  This book is easy to read and it’s suitable to be introduced to primary school students. It covers the history of Ang Mo Kio, which is the seventh housing town built by the Housing and Development Board (HDB) in the 1970s to the development of Ang Mo Kio New Town.

  Image: All rights reserved. National Heritage Board, 2011.

- Balestier: a heritage trail
  Call Number: 959.57 BAL
  This book is easy to read and it’s suitable to be introduced to primary school students. It covers the history of Balestier. It also provides some examples of Singapore shophouses such as Sim Kwong Ho Shophouse and Art Deco Shophouse.

  Image: All rights reserved. National Heritage Board, 2006.

- Bishan heritage trail: 10 places to see
  Call Number: 959.57 BIS
  Imprint: Singapore Kwong Wai Siew Peck San Theng, 2009
  This book is easy to read and it’s suitable to be introduced to primary school students. It covers the history of Bishan to the development of the Bishan New Town, which is currently one of the most popular public housing choices in Singapore.

  Image: All rights reserved. Singapore Kwong Wai Siew Peck San Theng, 2009

- Black and white: the Singapore house, 1898-1941 by Davison, Julian
  Call Number: 728.37095957 DAV
  This book describes the "black-and-white" style houses that were commonly built under Singapore's colonial period.

  Image: All rights reserved. Talisman, 2006.
- Bukit Timah: a heritage trail by Tan, November Peng Ting
  Call Number: 915.957 TAN
  This book is easy to read and it's suitable to be introduced to primary school students. It features the Masjid Al-Huda mosque, which is one of the last physical reminders of Malay kampong houses in Bukit Timah.

  Image: All rights reserved. National Heritage Board, 2007.

- Jalan Besar: a heritage trail
  Call Number: 959.57 JAL
  This book is easy to read and it's suitable to be introduced to primary school students. It covers the history of Jalan Besar, which provides one of the best examples of shophouses (built in the 1920s) in Singapore.

  Image: All rights reserved. National Heritage Board, 2006.

- Kim Seng: a reflection of Singapore's success by Tan, Sumiko
  Call Number: 959.57 TAN
  This book covers the history of Kim Seng, which was transformed from the ashes of burnt-out slums (two big fires in 1961 and 1968) to Bukit Ho Swee and Kim Seng housing estates.

  Image: All rights reserved. Kim Seng Publication Committee, c1996.

- Marine Parade: community by the sea, 30th anniversary celebrations by Lim, Charlotte M. C
  Call Number: 307.76095957 LIM
  This book covers Marine Parade-- Singapore's first residential estate built entirely on reclaimed land.

  Image: All rights reserved. Marine Parade Citizens' Consultative Committee, 2006

- Our homes: 50 years of housing a nation by Fernandez, Warren
  Call Number: 363.585095957 FER
  This book traces the story and history of how the flats and new towns rose gradually over the past 50 years.

  Image: All rights reserved. Published for the Housing and Development Board by Straits Times Press, c2011.

- Queenstown: a heritage trail.
  Call Number: 959.57 QUE
  This book is easy to read and it's suitable to be introduced to primary school students. It covers the history of Queenstown, being the first satellite town in Singapore where the first flats were built.

  Image: All rights reserved. National Heritage Board, 2008.

- Radin Mas: heritage trail: a tale of hills.
  Call Number: 959.57 RAD
  This book is easy to read and it's suitable to be introduced to primary school students. It covers the history of Radin Mas such as Malay village at Kampong Radin Mas as well as 21 blocks of flats built in the 1950s under Singapore Improvement Trust.

  Image: All rights reserved. Radin Mas Citizens' Consultative Committee in collaboration with Central Singapore, [2009]

- Reflections on housing a nation: a collection of commentaries by Mah, Bow Tan, 1948-
  Call Number: 363.585095957 MAH
  This book consists of the compilation of nine commentaries penned by Mr Mah Bow Tan, Minister for National Development (in office: 3 June 1999 – 20 May 2011). It also includes his thoughts on different public housing issues, such as the approach to supply and pricing, how the HDB caters to different groups of Singaporeans as well as the challenges in housing a nation.

  Image: All rights reserved. Ministry of National Development, [2011]

- Singapore Houses by Robert Powell; William Lim (Foreword by); Albert Lim (Photographer); Albert Lim KS (Photographer)
  Call Number: 728.095957 POW
  This book contains the recent designs (from the beginning of the twenty-first century) of some large residential houses in Singapore.
A bibliography that consists of recommended books, monographs, journal articles and working papers on Singapore housing; this provides a good starting point for researchers interested to look for resources on Singapore housing.

- Singapore Housing by Belinda Yuen; Teo Ho Pin; Ooi Giok Ling
  Call Number: 016.35355 YUE
  A bibliography that consists of recommended books, monographs, journal articles and working papers on Singapore housing; this provides a good starting point for researchers interested to look for resources on Singapore housing.

- Singapore Shophouse by Julian Davison; Luca Invernizzi Tettoni (Photographer)
  Call Number: 720.95957 DAV
  This book traces the development of various forms of Singapore shophouses -- Neoclassical, jubilee-style, modern—from the early shophouse to the modern shophouse today.

- Singapore Sketchbook by Gretchen Liu; Graham Byfield
  Call Number: 959.57 BYF
  This book is easy to read and it’s suitable to be introduced to primary school students. It consists of paintings and pencil sketches of the various types of old shophouses, colonial houses, terrace houses and bungalows in Singapore.

- The new Singapore house by Powell, Robert, 1942-
  Call Number: 728.095957 POW
  This book identifies and analyses the major trends in the design of houses in Singapore from 1945 to the end of the century. It also highlights some outstanding houses built in Singapore (1988- 2001).

- The Singapore house 1819-1942 by Lee, Kip Lin
  Call Number: 728.095957 LEE
  This book displays the various types of houses and villas, which were beautifully constructed from 1819 to 1942. It also contains the photographs and architectural drawings of these houses and villas.

- The Singapore house and residential life 1819-1939 by Edwards, Norman, 1930-
  Call Number: 728.095957 EDW
  This book covers the the history on the different types of houses in Singapore from 1819 to 1939.

- TK rediscovers Mountbatten
  Call Number: 959.57 TK
  Imprint: [Singapore : Tanjong Katong Secondary School, 2007]
  This book is easy to read and it’s suitable to be introduced to primary school students. It showcases the interesting places within the neighbourhood of Tanjong Katong. It includes fifteen bungalows in Mountbatten (originally residences for the wealthy), which were granted conservation status by the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA).

- Toa Payoh : our kind of neighbourhood by Koh, Buck Song
  Call Number: 307.76095957 KOH
  This book covers the history of Toa Payoh --the second satellite town built in Singapore.

- Yishun Sembawang : a heritage trail by Tan, Chui Hua
  Call Number: 959.57 YSH
  This book covers the history of Yishun Sembawang.
This book is easy to read and it’s suitable to be introduced to primary school students. It covers the history of Yishun and Sembawang from the days of gambier and pepper plantations in the 1800s to the development of the new towns in the late 1900s.

National Library Board (NLB) Databases

The National Library has subscribed to a number of electronic resources: databases, eBooks, eJournals, eMagazines and eNewspapers. They are accessible via the NLB eResources website. Click here for a list of electronic resources on Singapore. The following electronic resources provide excellent information to begin or supplement your research on the houses in Singapore.

- **NewspaperSG** [http://newspapers.nl.sg/]

   An online resource of current and historic Singapore and Malaya newspapers (over 200 titles), published between 1831 – 2009. For example, The Straits Times newspaper articles from the period 1845–1989 can be accessed from home (direct links to the articles are provided) while those after 1989 – 2009 can only be accessed onsite at the NLB libraries.

   Examples of newspaper articles retrieved on Singapore housing.

   - **MORE SUBURBAN HOMES GOING UP**
     The Singapore Free Press, 23 June 1960, Page 7

   - **Govt. to release 30 sites for development**
     The Straits Times, 12 September 1989, Page 40

   - **Punggol renewal**
     The Straits Times, 20 December 2009, Page 51

- **PicturesSG** [http://pictures.nl.sg/]

  Discover, Learn and Share about Singapore’s social history and development through our digital collection of images (photographs or artworks).

  Suggested keywords to search: housing, residential, attap, kampong. Alternatively, click on "Categories"->"Architecture and Landscape"
Examples of images retrieved on Singapore housing.

- A G.R. Lambert & Co. [1915] photograph showing some attap kampong (village) houses, possibly at Bukit Timah. On the left side, there are several piles of firewood.
- This [1960s] photograph shows one-storey and two-storey residential houses. There are large trees along the road. The bottom half of the photograph shows the expansive grounds and driveway of a house.

- This is a picture of block 78 which is also known as "Gor Lau" which means five-storey in dialect. It is the first five-storey flat built in Singapore.

- Singapore Infopedia, <http://infopedia.nl.sg>

Recommended for teachers, educators and general public to use this electronic encyclopedia as a starting point to research on Singapore's history, culture, people and events.

Suggested keywords to search: housing, public housing, public flats, housing estates. You may also search directly using the names of the housing estates such as "Clementi", "Yishun", etc. Alternatively, click on "Categories" --> "Streets and Places"
Examples of articles related to Singapore housing.

- Housing and Development Board (HDB)

The Housing and Development Board (HDB) is the national public housing authority of Singapore and it is currently headquartered at HDB Hub in Toa Payoh. It was formed in February 1960, shortly after Singapore attained self-government, to alleviate the severe housing ...

- Chinese Villages in the North

A historical description of several Chinese villages in the northern part of Singapore, from Kranji through Woodlands to Yishun. The villages described are Nee Soon Village, Kangkar Village, Chye Kay Village, Chong Pang Village, Heng Leh Pah Village, Mandai Tekong ...

- Malay villages in the North

Several Malay villages that used to exist in the northern part of Singapore, from Kranji through Woodlands to Yishun. The villages were Kampong Jalan Mata Ayer, Kampong Wak Hassan, Sungei Seletar villages, Kampung Wak Selat and Kampong Lorong Fatimah.

- Public housing in Singapore

Public housing in Singapore may be said to have begun in the 1930s with the housing schemes undertaken by the Singapore Improvement Trust (SIT), the predecessor of the Housing and Development Board (HDB). HDB replaced SIT as the national housing authority in 1960 ...

National Archives Databases

- Cartographic & Architectural Records Database Singapore (CARDS)
  http://www.a2o.com.sg/cards
  This database consists of early maps of Singapore as well as building plans of colonial buildings, government buildings and residential houses.

- Moving Image and Sound Archives Singapore (MISAS)
  http://www.a2o.com.sg/misas
  This database consists of the collection of audio-visual and sound recordings materials. Watch videos on past Singapore houses under the Programme Title: "Impact: Public Housing", “Berita Singapura: A New Look At Housing.”

- Picture Archives Singapore (PICAS)
  http://www.a2o.com.sg/picas
  This database consists of a huge collection of historical photographs. Simply conduct a search such as "housing" or "Singapore houses" to retrieve some images on historical houses in Singapore.

- POSTERS
  http://www.a2o.com.sg/posters/
  This database consists of Singapore posters which cover the period 1950 to the present. There are some old posters from Housing and Development Board (HDB), which aims to create awareness and educate Singapore residents on home and housing matters.

Regulatory Authorities in Singapore

- Building & Construction Authority (BCA)
  http://www.bca.gov.sg/
  Development of an excellent “built environment” (buildings, structures and infrastructure in our surroundings that provide the setting for the community’s activities) for Singapore.
  Address: 5 Maxwell Road, #16-00 Tower Block MND Complex, Singapore 069110
  Tel: 1800-342 5222 or (65) 6534 0219
  Fax: (65) 6325 4800
  E-mail: bca_enquiry@bca.gov.sg

- Housing and Development Board (HDB)
  http://www.hdb.gov.sg/
  Singapore’s public housing authority and a statutory board under the Ministry of National Development.
  Address: HDB Hub, 480 Lorong 6 Toa Payoh, Singapore 310480
  Tel: 6490-1111
  Fax: (65) 6490-1033
1965 Housing Development Board Flats (Berita Singa)
This video presents the success of Singapore's first five-year pla
Video courtesy of National Archives
www.a2o.com.sg
Uploaded by: Prime Minister's Office (PMO)

Home, Singapore - Video
This video is one of the examples on Singapore as home.
Uploaded by: TotalDefenceSG
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